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SUBJECT: SECURITY SECTOR REFORM: GOING NOWHERE, SLOWLY

REF: A. 05 KINSHASA 01776

1B. 05 KIN 01447

11. (SBU) Summary. The Security Sector Reform Joint Commission met on March 1 to address a heavy agenda, including the police census and the military disarmament and integration process. Despite the repeated concerns from the international community and the usual excuses from the GDRC, business remains very much as usual, with little progress made and even less in sight. End summary.

Police Census Plagued by Phantoms

12. (SBU) SRSG Swing began the discussion by terming the police census as "pretty much a disaster." In a process characterized by delays and inaccuracies, the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) has no idea of how many police officers it actually has, and reports 114,000 "declared" officers in a force which should probably number around 70,000. The discrepancy includes around 5,000 ghost workers in the Kinshasa area, while about 33 percent of the total number declared in North Kivu are believed to be ghost employees. There is significant incentive to falsify the books at almost every level, given that the average officer in the Kinshasa area (one of the most expensive regions in the DRC) earned 5,000 Congolese francs -- about US\$11.36 -- for the month of February. International Chiefs of Mission emphasized the need for an accurate census and credible identity documents as the basis for building a professional police force.

Military Integration / Demobilization Centers --
Desperate to Get In, Dying to Get Out

13. (SBU) The situation regarding the military integration and integrated centers received pointed criticism as well. SRSG Swing commended the GDRC for moving forward with integration, but also stated flatly that more needed to be done as the current situation -- with delays, confusion, and lack of support -- is untenable. Although the second wave of brassage is well underway, the lack of coordination means that too many soldiers arrive at centers where there is little or no support. Minister of Defense Onusumba noted that he gets no support from his colleagues at the Ministries of Budget and Finance, and stated that obtaining disbursements for supplies, salaries, and even food is extremely difficult.

14. (SBU) The discussion then segued into the actual conditions at the various centers, for instance at Kamina, where six participants recently died while waiting to be demobilized. Although the Military Intelligence Service opined that the deaths at Kamina were due to the advanced age of the demobilized "soldiers" rather than to lack of food, this only highlighted the absurd fact that many elderly "soldiers" were being first routed to the integration centers before being sent to demobilization centers. Of 5,000 combattants recently sent to the joint integration/demobilization center in Kamina, 1,000 were reportedly over 60 years old, some over 70. The numbers for the demobilization of ex-combattants through CONADER also remain unacceptably low. For instance, for the entire month of February, CONADER processed only 3,500 through its COs (orientation centers).

Arms Control Going Nowhere

15. (SBU) Despite general agreement that the GDRC and its partners are not effectively controlling weapons, limiting weapons or verifying a decrease in weapons in the region, no real progress seems imminent. There seems to be a widespread belief -- echoed by reports from civilians throughout the most heavily affected regions -- that combattants turn in a few token weapons for the financial incentive, but continue to hold onto significant weapon stocks as a hedge against uneasy political alliances and an uncertain future.

And Who Pays the Bill?

16. (SBU) Several other items regarding CONADER payments were discussed, including inflated fees charged to CONADER by the airport authority for WFP planes flying in support of the disarmament program, in addition to CONADER's responsibility for payment of the FARDC per diems for officials engaged in arms control and verification programs. As with other items raised, no particular consensus was reached, although VP Ruberwa promised to investigate and follow up. Suggestions that "as the amounts were small, why didn't CONADER just pay them?" gained no support from the donor community as a whole.

Comment

17. (SBU) This lengthy meeting raised many relevant issues but settled none. Wheels are spinning, everybody agrees that something must be done -- and time moves on. Almost every agenda item was closed with VP Ruberwa stating that he would raise the question with the Conseil Supérieur de la Defense. Despite general consensus that the security sector remains in a morass and that more needs to be done to clean it up, nobody seems willing or able to take the responsibility to do so. The GDRC complains, rightly, that it has limited means to finance the massive undertaking required to disarm the socially and militarily fragmented region. The international community responds, also rightly, that the GDRC bears the responsibility for implementing these actions, and resists attempts to pad the donor's portion of the bill in the interim. End comment.

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